

Senator Michelle Kidani
Thirtieth Hawai'i State Legislature

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Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

The season of Thanksgiving is upon us and I am always grateful for its arrival as it provides me even more opportunities to reflect upon gratitude. Each month my schedule is filled with productive meetings, community events, educational innovations and award ceremonies, each heartening and inspiring in their own right. They fill me with a deep sense of pride in who we are as a community, the way we care for our neighbors and the visionary future we hope to create for generations to come. We all share a heart for Hawai'i that has continued to change the landscape of our islands and raise keiki who understand the importance of service.

As we enjoy those moments of thanks with loved ones this Thanksgiving, I hope you are filled with the same gratitude for what we can and have accomplished as extended 'ohana and how we can work together to further affect positive change for our future. I look forward to the warm sentiments of the holiday season and send my heartfelt aloha to each and every one of you in the hopes that your Thanksgiving festivities are filled with love, laughter and 'ono food!

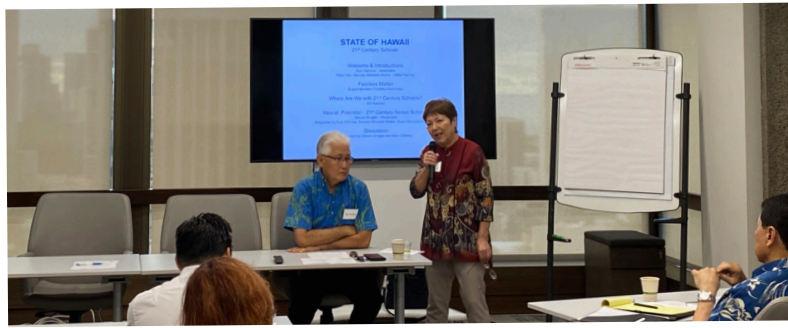
TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION MEETING



As the Chair of the Senate Committee on Education I have committed myself over the last four years to making meaningful changes in chronic teacher shortage and retention issues. I also believe that the best way to go about making this change is by bringing together partners to help with the work. A big mahalo to Jack Wong, CEO of Kamehameha Schools, Dean Nathan Murata of the UH Manoa College of Education, HSTA President Corey Rosenlee, Assistant Superintendent Cindy Covell of the DOE, Chris Van Berjik of Hawaii Community Foundation, and Lynn Hammonds of the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board for coming together to work on this issue.

I am excited at the ideas generated from these meetings as well as the commitments put forward to expand opportunities for paraprofessionals currently in the DOE to earn their Bachelor Degrees and become fully licensed teachers as well creating pipelines for students entering college who are interested in becoming teachers.

HIPA CONFERENCE



We have many big supporters and public-private partnerships who want to help redevelop our under and unutilized school lands for the benefit of our schools and students including HECO, HIPA, HSTA, Bank of Hawaii, Hawaii Carpenters and many more.

Mahalo to the Hawaii Institute for Public Affairs (HIPA) for hosting this gathering to discuss the progress and future of Act 155 and 21st Century Schools.

WAM KAUA'I VISIT

As a member of Ways and Means, each year we try to take our annual site visits. While on Kaua'i, we visited Kaua'i Community College to learn more about their growing Apiary (bee) Project which supports local agriculture.

I was also excited to visit Waimea and Kaua'i High Schools to discuss some of their new innovations as well as to address the needs of the staff and students for a new gymnasium. We also met with Mayor Kawakami and the Kaua'i Chamber of Commerce to hear from local businesses there. Other sites visited include: Kaua'i Veterans Memorial Hospital, Kekaha Ditch Irrigation System, Elele Affordable Housing Project and Ha'ena State Park, which sustained severe damage after extreme flooding on the Napali Coast.

SPECIAL SESSION



Part of the Senate's responsibility is the advise and consent process for cabinet members, boards and commissions, and judges. This month as a part of my duties as Senate Vice President, I presided over the Senate special session to confirm Kelsey Kawano to the Circuit Court of the Second Circuit and Rebecca Copeland and Alvin Nishimura to the District Family Court of the First Circuit.

Congratulations to all three judges and thank you for your commitment to service in our State!

WHS SOCU 25TH ANNIVERSARY



This year, Waipahu High School celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the opening of their Student Operated Credit Union, a partnership with Hawaii USA Federal Credit Union.

This amazing project has taught and engaged students in the important lessons of financial literacy as well as real-world experiences in the financial services sector. A special mahalo to Jean Miyahira who was there to help Waipahu High School start up the program 25 years ago!

LEADING WITH ALOHA

Jan Iwase is a long time educator and recently retired Principal of the Daniel K. Inouye Elementary School. She authored a new book, *Leading with Aloha*, about her experiences throughout her decades as a teacher and administrator. I enjoyed the book so much that I purchased copies for every teacher in the 6 elementary schools in my district, some of which have invited her to speak and do book signing. Due to limitations by Campaign Spending Commission, I am limited on funds spent on schools and charities.

